

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 675

By Henry

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Dr. Herbert C. Gabhart,
Chancellor and retired President of Belmont
University.

WHEREAS, it was with great sorrow and a profound sense of loss that the members of this General Assembly and the citizens of our State learned of the passing of Dr. Herbert C. Gabhart of Nashville, a gentleman of the highest honor and integrity; and

WHEREAS, a visionary leader in higher education who was devoted to his university, Dr. Herbert C. Gabhart served with acumen and industry as the President of Belmont University from 1959 until his retirement in 1982, when he accepted the position of Chancellor, where he continued to serve until the time of his death; and

WHEREAS, born on August 19, 1914, in Morganfield, Kentucky, Herbert C. Gabhart was a graduate of Carson-Newman College and received his PhD from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; and

WHEREAS, during his lifetime Dr. Gabhart was called to lead two pastorates, serving First Baptist Church of Williamsburg, Kentucky, and McClean Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, named President of Belmont College in 1959, Dr. Gabhart would spend the next fifty years giving his full measure of devotion to the growth and expansion of that esteemed institution, increasing the student enrollment from 360 students in 1959 to more than 2,000 when he retired as president in 1982 – a growth rate of over 500 percent; and

WHEREAS, President Gabhart annually met the challenge of providing a quality education for Belmont's students as he oversaw annual budgets that increased from \$480,000 to \$8,000,000 during his tenure, expanding academic offerings by adding many new majors and degrees in such areas as music, nursing, business, and more; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Gabhart's legacy at Belmont is evidenced by the physical expansion of facilities on the campus with nine new buildings constructed during his tenure, including the Massey Performing Arts Center, the Wheeler Humanities Building, the Hitch Science Building, and the library; and

WHEREAS, a beloved figure to generations of Belmont students, faculty and staff, Dr. Gabhart was most appropriately honored when the new student activities facility was named the Gabhart Student Center, a just tribute to a gentleman who cared deeply for every student and their education at Belmont University; and

WHEREAS, sharing his keen insight and vast experience, Dr. Herbert Gabhart served as past president of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Universities, chairman of the Affiliated Independent Colleges of Tennessee, and on the executive committee of the Southern Baptist Convention; and

WHEREAS, actively involved in his community, Herbert C. Gabhart was a longtime member of the Nashville Kiwanis Club and an esteemed member of the Nashville Chamber of Commerce; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Dr. Gabhart was the recipient of numerous honors during his lifetime, including the prestigious Brotherhood Award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews and the Ralph Brunson Spiritual Alms Award, a lifetime achievement honor, from the Kiwanis Club, as well as receiving special recognition as a Distinguished Alumnus of Carson-Newman College; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Herbert Gabhart was a longtime member of Belmont Heights Baptist Church, which he served faithfully for many years in numerous capacities, and was a current member of First Baptist Church Nashville; and

WHEREAS, Herbert Gabhart was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always remained true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Gabhart was preceded in death by his wife of fifty-six years, Helen Ashburn Gabhart, his eldest daughter, Diana Ruth Gabhart, and two siblings, Elizabeth Lorene Gabhart and William Royal Gabhart; and

WHEREAS, he is survived by his wife, Dr. Norma Baker Gabhart, and was the proud father of Betty Fay Gabhart Smith and Jo Ellen Gabhart Aleshire, and the beloved grandfather

of four treasured grandchildren, Jennie Lee Aleshire, Jonathan Daniel Aleshire, William Timothy Smith, and Matthew Conway Smith; and

WHEREAS, he is also survived by his sister, Helen Louis Gabhart Hayden, his two sons-in-law, James Randolph Smith and Daniel O. Aleshire, and four nephews and a niece, Robert Alan Hayden, Daniel Riley Hayden, Charles M. Ashburn, Bill Ashburn, and Becky Ashburn Clark; and

WHEREAS, Herbert C. Gabhart leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the remarkable life of this exceptional educator, public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Dr. Herbert C. Gabhart, reflecting fondly upon his bountiful life of academic excellence, his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Dr. Gabhart.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.